

ABSTRACT

ACQUISITION OF SWIMMING BEHAVIOUR IN INFANTS

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Early studies about acquisition of swimming behavior in infants identified an ordered sequence of movement patterns span the first year of life. The explanation attributed to this fact defends that it happens due to changes in motor control caused by the maturation of nervous system. Nevertheless, it has been questioned, suggesting a smaller predisposition of the organism in the skills acquisition process, suggesting a bigger environmental influence in the acquisition of this behavior. In this way, the present study aimed testing the effects of practice on elementary swim patterns. For this, sixteen full-terms, fourteen weeks ear old infants, were recruited from the Londrina State University community in Londrina. The infants were randomly assigned to one of two groups. The experimental group was taken to the aquatic environment twice a week for a period of seven consecutive months and received thirty minutes of stimulation of swimming patterns each day. The control group received no systematic stimulation. Both groups were taken to aquatic environment twice a month and filmed for a period of fifteen minutes in each experimental position. The movements made by all the body or the segments, during more than two consecutive seconds, were considered to this analysis. From the data gathered it was possible to identify some behavioural patterns regarding to the action of the head, the

limbs and the trunk. A planned comparison confirmed that the duration of the most frequent movement of the experimental group was longer than that of the control group. Those results suggest that the effects of practice can provide variations on some swimming behavior.

Keywords: Infants, Motor development, Swimming reflex.